



May 1973

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LAUREL MEADOW

by James B. Spratley
 Laurel Meadow is in lower Hanover, Virginia, near Polegreen Corner. According to an early land patent, George Polegreen owned land at or near Polegreen Corner as early as 1693. The house at Laurel Meadow is an unpretentious but interesting English type of farmhouse dating back to the Colonial era. It is believed that it has been built between 1715 and 1725. The exact date is lost with the early records of New Kent and Hanover Counties. It has no central hall, but stands a story and a half above a full English basement in which the dining room and kitchen are located. The house has hand-hewn beams and the original wide floor boards, all of heart pine. Little of the original hardware remains.

Francis Oliver (1620) is the earliest record of an Oliver in Virginia. Two years later, Edward Oliver is listed as being alive after the Indian Massacre in 1622. Six Olivers emigrated from England to Virginia in the 1630 to 1650 period. No way has been found of connecting any of them with the Olivers in Hanover County.

According to research thus far, Francis Oliver in 1620 is the earliest record of an Oliver in Virginia. Two years later, Edward Oliver is listed as being alive after the Indian Massacre in 1622. Six Olivers emigrated from England to Virginia in the 1630 to 1650 period. No way has been found of connecting any of them with the Olivers in Hanover County.

The first Oliver discovered thus far in Hanover County is one reference in the Vestry Book of St. Paul's Parish in which Isaac Oliver is listed on February 6, 1731-32 as an owner of

A plat now in the Virginia State Library gives positive proof that in 1821, Laurel Meadow plantation and the adjacent White Chimneys plantation

Handwritten note or signature at the bottom left.



Ernestine DODL
 210 MEADOWRIDGE DR
 LYNCHBURG VA 24503-3P

real estate which he had only recently acquired from William Henderson. This Isaac Oliver is probably a forebear of the Isaac Oliver previously referred to as owning Laurel Meadow in 1821. In the 1732 to 1750 period, John Oliver on two occasions is referred to in the same Vestry book as owning real estate in Hanover.

From 1750 to 1784, the St. Paul's Parish minutes list Benjamin Oliver, probably a son of John, as the only Oliver that owned property in Hanover. When land taxes began to be levied in the county in 1782, Benjamin Oliver (later Senior) was the only Oliver to pay such taxes until 1798. After this date, several other Olivers are listed on the land tax records, presumably all direct descendants of Benjamin Oliver Sr. One of these is Isaac referred to earlier as the owner of Laurel Meadow in 1821.

Tax records show that Isaac Oliver began his own housekeeping establishment in Hanover in 1809 and it is plausible to conclude that he started on the 260-acre White Chimneys tract he obtained from Benjamin Oliver Sr. in 1810. Land patent records do not include any Olivers that obtained property from this source in the area now known as Hanover and it appears that the land tax record of a purchase by Benjamin Oliver Sr. of 260 acres in 1798 from Daniel Whitlock is the source of the White Chimneys property that Benjamin Oliver Sr. conveyed to Isaac Oliver in 1810. From the Estate of Benjamin Oliver Sr. who died in 1819 or 1820, Isaac Oliver received 879 acres which included the Laurel Meadow property adjacent to White Chimneys which he already owned.

The ownership of Laurel Meadow from the time the land patent was issued until the Olivers acquired it has not been determined and the search for information along this line is likely to be difficult.

According to the tax records, Isaac Oliver died about 1831 or 32 and Ann A. Oliver, his wife, retained Laurel Meadow (probably a life interest) until 1848 when it passed into the hands of Elizabeth H. Miller who in turn sold it to George K. Hundley in 1860.

In the 1861-65 period, both Federal and Confederate Troops were on the premises. Miss Beryl Hundley, granddaughter of the first Hundley to own Laurel Meadow, reported that General Stonewall Jackson spent the night in the Laurel Meadow house in 1862 and met General Lee at Walnut Grove Church the following morning, also that General Jackson did not sleep in the room assigned to him but spent all night in the dining room writing dispatches.

Trenches and artillery emplacements are still in place from the Polegreen skirmish on June 1st, 1864. There are reports that inhabitants of the nearby area took refuge during the fighting in the basement of the house.

After holding the property about forty years, the Hundleys sold it to John W. and Catherine L. Simpkins who five years later conveyed it to Ella H. Shelton. In 1903 Laurel Meadow was sold to James A. McGhee and his estate sold it in 1937 to the present owners, James B. and Mary N. Spratley.

ACQUISITIONS

- 96. Collection of papers from Clerk's office, Xerox
- 97. Will of Henry Pollard 1851. Letters from his children James M. Pollard and Amanda Pollard, gift of Stuart Oliver.
- 98. Record of marriage license, Patrick Henry and Dorothea Dandridge 1777 (copy) from Mrs. L. D. Campbell.

[continued page 8]

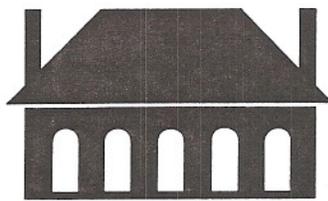
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Old Homes of Hanover County, Virginia



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1983

tradition, it was probably constructed around 1838-1840. It was valued at \$40,000 in 1850 which would indicate that it was a valuable piece of property at that time. The home is of English Bond brick, two-and-a-half stories. The front entrance has a large four-paneled heart pine door with a fan shaped transom. All inside doors are two and four-paneled heart pine and poplar, each with a three-light transom above and all equipped with the original wrought iron and brass locks and hinges. There is a lovely two-flight stairway with twelve inch heart pine treads and heart pine risers and spills with a mahogany rail and paneled sides. The flooring is six and eight inch heart pine. There are eight large fireplaces with handsome mantels. Ingleside was General Grant's headquarters during the Battle of Cold Harbor.

¹Middlesex County Marriage Register
²Deed Book I, p. 318.

Lama

Lama (pronounced Leemay) is a very old home. The date of construction and by whom are unknown, but its features spell age. The house is pegged together. The floors and mantels are original, as well as the doors. The double doors to the living room are unusual in that they are solid on one side and paneled on the other side. When Colonial Williamsburg was being restored in the 1930's, an unsuccessful attempt was made to buy the hand ripped heart pine floors and hand carved mantel from Willard Alexander, the owner at that time.



Lama (courtesy of Grace Grubbs)

The house has an English basement originally with a large fireplace. There were two storage cellars beneath the basement which were entered by trap doors in the center of the rooms. The wood floors were replaced with cement floors, closing the entrances to the cellars permanently. Originally the house had dormer windows which were removed in 1910 when the roof was raised.

The property was once owned by Robert Anderson, and in 1854 came into the possession of William J. Alexander. Sometime after that date an old kitchen with two

rooms and attic located on the property was moved and joined to the rear of the house. A later owner, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Russell, had this addition dismantled and the material from this old kitchen was used to build a wing on the south end of the house. In the field northeast of the present home can be found evidence of the foundation of a large building.

Yankee soldiers were camped so thickly on Lama farm under both McClellan and Grant during the battles of Cold Harbor that they had to station their own guards at the house to protect Mrs. William J. Alexander and her children from other soldiers. Mrs. Alexander was Judith Burnett, daughter of Richard Burnett and Elizabeth (Hill) Burnett.

In 1911 the house and 160 acres of land came into the possession of Willard M. Alexander, their son. His widow, Laura (Douglas) Alexander sold the property in 1959 to Herman Lukhard who in turn sold to Edward and Eunice Russell. The present owners and occupants are Mr. and Mrs. Harry Justice and Mr. and Mrs. Cole D. Watts.

The home is located on Route 628 below Old Church.

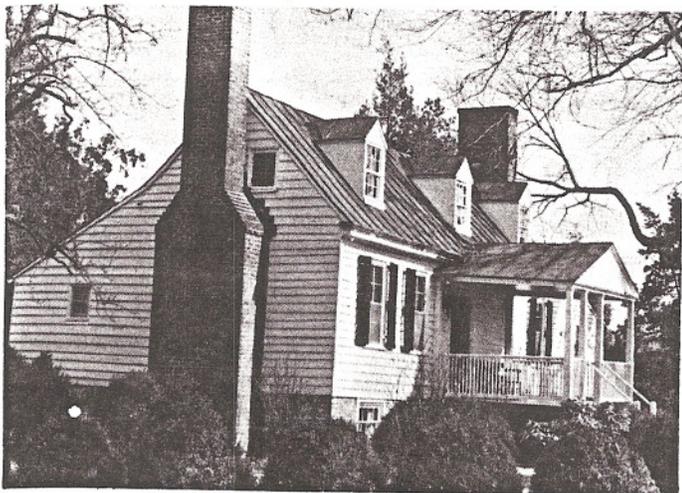
The information on Lama was contributed by Grace (Alexander) Grubbs (Mrs. William Grubbs), a descendant of William J. Alexander.

Laurel Meadow

In Patent Book 8, page 245, a land patent to Rice Hughes 29 April 1693 mentioned the land of George Polegreen on Beaverdam Swamp, which is believed to be the same land on which the home, Laurel Meadow, was later built. This old home is an English type farmhouse dating back to the Colonial era. The exact date is unknown. It has no center hall but stands a story-and-a-half above a full English basement in which the dining room and kitchen are located. The house has hand-hewn beams and the original wide floor boards, all of heart pine.

A plat plan shows Laurel Meadow in 1821 adjoining White Chimneys plantation both of which were owned by Isaac Oliver. Of the 1139 acres shown on the plat, including a grist mill, 879 are depicted thereon as being in the Laurel Meadow tract and 260 in the White Chimneys tract. There were Oliver's in Hanover County early. Isaac Oliver was a son of Benjamin Oliver, a descendant of one of these early Oliver's. Tax records show he had his own housekeeping establishment in 1809. From the estate of Benjamin Oliver, Sr. who died 1819 or 1820, Isaac Oliver received 879 acres which included the Laurel Meadow tract adjacent to White Chimneys, which he already owned. Isaac Oliver died ca. 1831 and Ann A. Oliver, his wife, retained Laurel Meadow until 1848 when it passed into the hands of Elizabeth H. Miller who sold it to George K. Hundley in 1860.

During the Civil War the home was occupied by both Federal and Confederate troops. A descendant of the first Hundley to own Laurel Meadow and who lived here during that period, reported that General Stonewall Jackson spent the night there in 1862 and met General Lee at Walnut Grove Church the following morning; and that General Jackson did not sleep in the room assigned to him but spent the night in the dining room writing dispatches. Trenches and



Laurel Meadow (courtesy of Leah Taylor)

artillery emplacements are still in place from the Polegreen skirmish on June 1, 1864.

After holding the property about 40 years, the Hundley's sold it to John W. and Catherine L. Simpkins who five years later conveyed it to Ella H. Shelton. The next owner was James A. McGhee; and in 1937 it was sold to the present owners, James B. and Mary N. Spratley.

Laurel Meadow is located off Meadowbridge Road (Route 627), also known as Polegreen Road.

This information is from an article by James B. Spratley which is found in the Hanover County Historical *Bulletin* May 1973, No. 8.

Liberty Hall

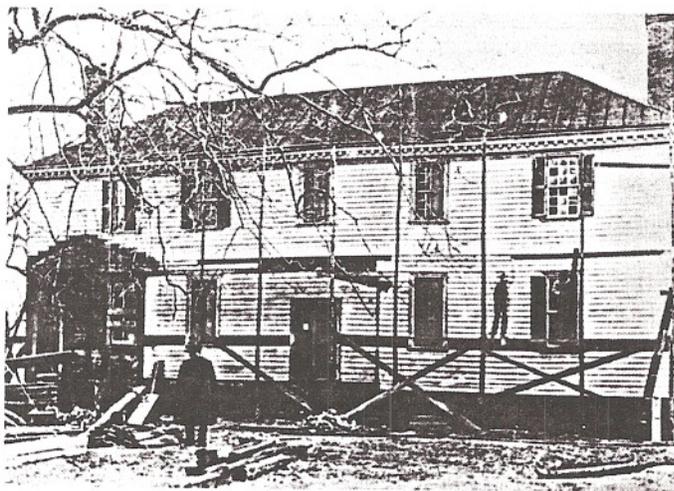
The land on which this house once stood was owned first by Thomas Meredith, Sr. who received a patent in 1661 of 1370 acres on the north side of Chickahominy swamp about a mile and half from Powhite swamp.¹ The land stayed in the Meredith family for many years. The next owner was Samuel Meredith, Sr. (1689-1762), grandson of Thomas Meredith, Sr. and son of Thomas Meredith, Jr.; and it next passed to Col. Samuel Meredith, Jr. who married as his second wife, Jane Henry, sister of the Hon. Patrick Henry.² Col. Meredith was with Patrick Henry on his famous Gunpowder Expedition to Williamsburg.

The next recorded owner was Daniel Trueheart. The Trueheart family owned large parcels of land in this vicinity Daniel Trueheart land was processed in 1771 and in 1779 according to St. Paul's Vestry Book, but it was 1795 when Daniel Trueheart was identified with Liberty Hall. The tax list of that year showed him with 1665 acres "from Samuel Meredith and Sherwood Martin." The Mutual Assurance files of 1801 has a policy on Liberty Hall signed by William Trueheart describing the property as a wooden dwelling, with kitchen, and stable. The dwelling was two-story underpinned with brick, three feet above the surface of the ground, 60 ft. long by 32½ ft. wide. When and by whom this old house was built cannot be documented, but in 1931 the house was dismantled and the material, wood, mantels, doors, etc. were taken to Williamsburg to aid in the restora-

tion of the old homes there. This would indicate that Liberty Hall was of the Revolutionary War period or earlier.

Daniel Trueheart's heirs sold the property in 1841 to Joseph Starke, and in 1864 (deed recorded 1866) his heirs sold it to William L. Cowardin of Richmond. The Cowardin's lived here until 1872 when they sold to Jacob N. House and James W. Hercus containing 471 acres at that time. In 1902 James W. Hercus sold to William B. Sledd 100 acres "a part of land of Liberty Hall where the dwelling and other buildings are situated."

The home was located not far from Walnut Grove Church on route 636. The present entrance is on route 360, and the subdivision located here takes its name from the old site. In September 1978 an historical marker noting this site was dedicated in ceremonies at U.S. 360 and near Route 643. The marker is on route 360 and was presented by the



Liberty Hall (courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)

Thomas Meredith Chapter of the Colonial Dames of 17th Century from Corsicana, Texas.

For additional information, see articles in the Hanover County Historical Society's *Bulletin*, No. 17, November 1977.

¹Patent Book 5, page 197.

²Jane Henry, born at Studley about 1738, married Col. Samuel Meredith (1732-1808) and died 1819, both are buried at "Winton" in Amherst County where their tombstones can be seen.

Liggan's

This home was built about 1853 by Spottswood Liggan and it has been in his family since that date. Spottswood Liggan was the son of Henry and Elizabeth Liggan. He was born in 1819 and died in 1899. He married in 1844, Martha J. Alexander (1827-1899). After their marriage Spottswood and Martha Liggan first lived down the road a short distance, but on the same tract of land. It was in 1853 that they built the present house and later tore down the older one. Some of the dependencies are older than the house, having been moved from the old site and rebuilt at the present location. Originally this house had three dormers with a small front porch. It was in 1911 when the home needed a new roof that the

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superintendence of Mr. W.B. Langridge on the 12th inst. and close 12th December following with a vacation of one month in the summer. Terms - For board \$80; for tuition in Latin, Greek, and Mathematics \$30; in English from \$15 to \$25 according to the advancement of the pupil.

--W.B. Sydnor

Meadow Farm and the Sydnor family played an important role in the organization of Walnut Grove Baptist Church. Mr. Edward Sydnor, of Oakley Hill, gave the land in 1845 on which the church now stands. The school was also the site where the Baptist congregation sometimes met before the church was built.

An interesting article in *The Religious Herald* of 1921, written by Henry Clinton Sydnor, the young son of William B. and Sarah T. Sydnor, tells of the family experiences during the Civil War when the Battles of Cold Harbor, Ellerson's Mill and Mechanicsville were being fought all around Meadow Farm which was only one mile from Ellerson's Mill. William B. Sydnor sent away many members of his family; only a daughter, a son, his wife, and himself remained. This family had sixteen children, five of whom were in the Confederate Army. "The Federal officers and soldiers erected tents everywhere and telegraph wires were tacked to the trees. The wagons, each drawn by four fine mules seemed to be in the thousands. The barn was also taken over as headquarters for the men who did picket duty on the Chickahominy River." The family was confined to the immediate surroundings and the officers told Mr. Sydnor they would respect his family and not willfully destroy his property. After the Yankees left, Longstreet's men passed through on their way to Cold Harbor, two miles distance. According to tradition, Robert E. Lee also visited Meadow Farm on his way to rendezvous with "Stonewall" Jackson at Walnut Grove Church. In 1908 it came into the possession of Jessie L. Dodsworth.

This home will also be remembered for the camp operated by Mr. and Mrs. Caleb Dodsworth for boys and girls for many years with youths attending from all over the country, most of whom were impressed with the historical aspects of the home, as well as the surrounding area, where many men fell during the fierce fighting which took place in the area.

For additional information see Hanover County Historical Society's *Bulletin* No. 17, November 1977.

Town of Newcastle - A Lost Town

In 1682, David Crafford patented 1,316 acres adjoining lands of Sir Philip Honywood, Moses Davies, Thomas Glass and James Turner. On 22 April 1693 he "by deed did give, grant and convey" to his grandson William Meriwether, son of Nicholas and Elizabeth Crafford Meriwether, about 400 acres of land "of the plantation whereon he then lived,

known by the name of Assaquin."²

About 1730 William Meriwether laid off 40 acres of his land for a warehouse and a town which he called Newcastle. It was surveyed by John Henry (father of Patrick) in 1738 and platted in half-acre lots with six streets parallel to the Pamunkey River and three running down hill to the Common along the river. Names of the lot owners are listed on the accompanying map.

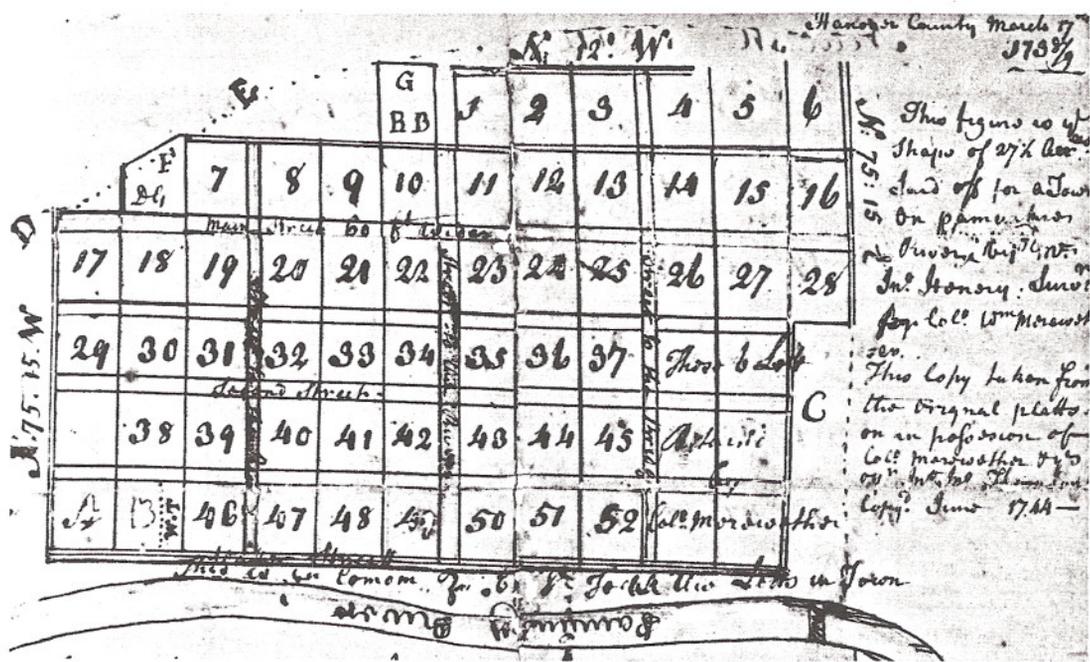
In May 1740, the Assembly gave power to Justices of Hanover, viz., Wm. Meriwether, John Henry, John Bickerton and Francis Jerdone executor of Wm. Johnson's estate to build by subscription a bridge "over Pamunkey river from a place called Newcastle in Hanover county, to the land of Edmund Littlepage, in King William County."³ It was further enacted "that the same be not less than 12 ft. in breadth, railed on each side three feet high, with one arch, at least 30 feet wide, sufficiently high for the passage of boats and flats." Also, the tolls and duties are spelled out for this, no doubt, the first bridge over a tidal river in any of the colonies.

"An Act to confirm the lots of the town of Newcastle to the purchasers there;" was passed in September 1744.⁴ The following year in February 1745 an Act was passed naming Newcastle in all three provisos to wit: "Wodden Chimnies not to be built, in the town of Port Royal, Newcastle or Suffolk"; "Hogs not to run at large in the towns of Newtown or Newcastle;" but most important, "Fairs to be kept in Newcastle . . . on the first Tuesday in April and the third Tuesday in November" for two days.⁵ With this incentive, in addition to warehouses for the collection of tobacco, stores were built for the sale of European goods, there were at least two taverns and two doctors, Dr. Shores, and Dr. Cochrane who married a granddaughter of Col. John Syme. Many residents dwelt in commodious houses and enjoyed much social activity as evidenced from artifacts and letters and accounts in *The Virginia Gazette*.

Newcastle was incorporated as a town by the session of the General Assembly in 1749, the first, and for 13 years the only town in Hanover County.

(The following information is contained in an article by Alonzo T. Dill and Brent Tarter in the *Virginia Cavalcade*, Summer 1980, Vol. XXX, No. 1). Agitation for a new capital city began in 1738, and Charles Carter of Cleve's motion brought a debate identifying three factions in the Assembly, -those for a James River site, for a York River site, and for Williamsburg. Carter's motion died. In 1747, after the capitol in Williamsburg burned relocation was again a source of argument and for the first time Newcastle was mentioned, in an amendment which was defeated. In 1748 and in 1749 Newcastle was specifically proposed again, but defeated 4-3 by the councillors as was the 1752 bill, although that year Newcastle had won out again the House. " . . . it is possible that in 1779 Newcastle was again in the running (when Richmond was chosen) but no evidence has been found to verify that Hanover town in the 1779 proposal as a rival to Richmond."

An important date which marks Newcastle in Revolutionary War history but which is often ignored and seldom understood, is May 2, 1775, when Patrick Henry called the



"Hanover County —
 Mar. 17th 1738/9
 This figure is ye shape
 of 27 1/2 acres laid off
 for a Town on
 Pamunkey River by
 Mr. Jn.º Henery,
 Surv.º for Col.º Wm.
 Merewether.
 This copy taken from
 the original plats in
 possession of Col.º
 Merewether & oy.º Ir.º
 Jn.º Thomson
 Copy.º June 1744"

Plan Of Newcastle Town

- AB The Warehouses) In How's possession
- C Col.º Merewether's 6 lots) They were in . . .
- DE The main road) Col.º Merewether's Death 1751

| Lot No. | Owner | Occupant | Lot No. | Owner | Occupant |
|---------|------------------|----------------------------|---------|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Wm. Morris | Black: Hugh's | 27 | --- Walters | himself |
| 2 | Jn. Ballard | The Heirs of Ballard | 28 | Mr. Chapman | his heirs |
| 3 | Farg. Matthison | Dr. Shore's | 29 | Wm. Taylor | Mat. Anderson |
| 4 | Wm. Taylor | himself | 30 | Wm. Belamy | Do. |
| 5 | Ditto | Do. | 31 | Do. | Do. |
| 6 | Wm. Neilson | himself | 32 | Do. | Dun. Graham |
| 7 | Jno. Poindexter | himself | 33 | David Holt | Do. |
| 8 | Jno. Ballard | his heirs | 34 | Wm. Macon | himself |
| 9 | Jno. Henery | Col. Jno. Cheswell | 35 | Wm. Massie | his heirs |
| 10 | Jno. Poindexter | Do. | 36 | Edd. Littlepage | Jno. Thomson |
| 11 | Jno. Holt | himself | 37 | Leighton Wood | Robt. Jennings |
| 12 | James Littlepage | Hyndman & Donald | 38 | David Holt | David Holt, Jr. |
| 13 | Wm. Parks | his heirs | 39 | Peter Marks | himself |
| 14 | Jno. Dandridge | himself | 40 | David Holt | Wm. Holt |
| 15 | Wm. Neilson | himself | 41 | Fra: Jordan | Dun. Graham |
| 16 | Samll. Hale | Wm. Coles | 42 | Jno. Dixon | himself |
| 17 | Jno. Thomson | himself | 43 | Jno. Holt | himself |
| 18 | Ditto | Do. | 44 | Rchd. Littlepage | himself |
| 19 | Wm. Parks | his heirs | 45 | Do. | Do. |
| 20 | Jno. Thomson | Dun. Graham | 46 | Peter Marks | himself |
| 21 | Jos. Peace | Do. | 47 | Do. | Do. |
| 22 | Wm. Johnstone | Do. Taylor, Tennet to D.G. | 48 | Neill Buchanan | Duncan Graham |
| 23 | Richard Johnson | Geo. Webb | 49 | Jno. Dixon | himself |
| 24 | Edd. Littlepage | Donald & Hyndman | 50 | Richd. Johnson | Harden Burnley |
| 25 | Leighton Wood | Robt. Jennings | 51 | Jno. Dandridge | Jos. Fox |
| 26 | --- Walters | himself | 52 | Jno. Darrecott | Dun. Graham |
| | | | F | Dun. Graham 1746 | bought of Thos. Merewether |
| | | | G | Robt. Brown 1747 | Dun. Graham his heirs |

The names of the above lot owners and occupants have been typed for easy reading and to save space. The drawing is from the original, courtesy of the Virginia State Library, Archives Division.

members of the Hanover Committee (Supervisors) as well as the Hanover Volunteers to meet in Newcastle. Dunmore had ordered the supply of gunpowder, which was the lawful property of the people, removed from the Powder Horn in Williamsburg to the H.M.S. Fowey. This was of serious consequence and Patrick Henry planned to march to Williamsburg "to obtain satisfaction for the publick powder, by reprisal or otherways."⁶ He waited for the Hanover Committee to approve of his plan by resolution before he would allow his men to march. The following is a portion from Alexander Purdie's Virginia Gazette account of what happened:

"Doncastle's ordinary, New Kent, May 4, 1775, received from the Hon. Richard Corbin, Esq.; his Majesty's Receivergeneral £330 as a compensation for the gunpowder taken out of the publick magazine by the Governor's order; which money I promise to convey to the Virginia delegates to the General Congress, to be, under their direction, laid out in gunpowder for the colony's use . . . & . . ."

PATRICK HENRY, Jr.

Samuel Meredith
Test. Parke Goodall

Thus the Virginia "Gunpowder Expedition", comparable to the Lexington-Concord problem was accomplished, but without bloodshed.

By 1781 when Lafayette wrote a letter to Governor Nelson from Newcastle under date of August 6,⁷ reporting a scarcity of Arms for the militia coming in to camp, and a want of cartridges, the serious consequences of war had brought armies marching along the road and camping upon the plains at Newcastle.

The surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown brought no resurgence of trade and prosperity to the Pamunkey river area. By 1811, the few remaining homes at Newcastle were torn down by their owners, and Richmond, the new state capital with a canal system along the James River to the west became the center of trade and subsequent population growth, leaving only cornfields on the plain of Newcastle and no ships to disturb the six feet of tidal waters in the Pamunkey River there.

The Newcastle town site is a registered Virginia Historic Landmark.

V.M.S.E.

¹Patent Book 7, p. 234.

²Henning, Laws of Virginia p. 257.

³Ibid. p. 108.

⁴Ibid. p. 257.

⁵Ibid. p. 387.

⁶Alexander Purdie's Virginia Gazette.

⁷Virginia Historical Magazine, p. 382.

Oak Forest

This lovely old home located on Route 643, has every indication of being a Revolutionary War period home. Tradi-

tion is that it was originally an Overton home, probably that of Col. Samuel Overton who died before 1782 when "estate" was shown by his name on the 1782 tax list, leaving an estate of 1428 acres. The initials "C.A.O." are found on one of the original window panes. In the restoration work in the 1960's, the restorers found old hair plaster, floor joists which were mortised into sills and pinned, and all wood of heart pine. The house is one-room deep on each side of a center hall on the first and second floors over a basement. Most of the weather boarding outside is original and is beaded at the edges. All glass windows are original. There were iron bars on the windows of one room in the basement. The beautiful mantels and woodwork and most doors are also original, including one lock. The kitchen was added in 1903.¹



Oak Forest (courtesy of Leah Taylor)

A younger Samuel Overton and his family were living here in 1850 according to the census. He was age 50; his wife, Catherine, age 40; and his two daughters, Mary J., age 23 and Frances T., age 20. This family occupied Oak Forest during the Civil War when J.E.B. Stuart rode by on his famous ride around McClellan's army. He met "Stonewall" Jackson at Hickory Well, which is across the road from Oak Forest. This old home and its occupants witnessed the Yankee soldiers camped on the property on their way to Cold Harbor, and the house was used as their headquarters.

After the War, in 1869, Edward Howard, Trustee for Samuel Overton, then deceased, sold Oak Forest to James G. Tinsley which consisted of only 127 acres at that time.² James G. Tinsley and Pattie, his wife, in turn sold to John Bell Bigger of Richmond in 1871.³ Mrs. Frances R. Vial was the next owner in 1875⁴ and she and her family lived here for over thirty years when in 1907 they sold to F. Mitterer and Sallie E. Mitterer, his wife, " . . . certain tract with frame dwelling called, 'Oak Forest' opposite the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Carey Tate . . . 114 acres." By 1935 the home tract consisted of 40 acres. The Mitterer heirs lived here until 1956 when it was sold to the W.D. Brumble's.

¹Herald Progress, March 27, 1969.

²Deed Book 3, p. 219.

³Deed Book 5, p. 553.

⁴Deed Book 13, p. 8



Parsley's or Figuly (courtesy of Leah Taylor)

deus Ellett shall be supported by John A. McMinn as one of his family and after the death of John A. McMinn, Thaddeus Ellett shall transfer the whole property to Mrs. Bettie H. McMinn, wife of John A. McMinn and to her children." Bettie H. McMinn was sister to Thaddeus Ellett. They were children of Temple and Mary (Acree) Ellett. John A. McMinn and Bettie H. Ellett, his wife, had a daughter Hannah, who married Charles F. Parsley, son of Joseph and Alice T. Parsley; and a son, Lindsay E. McMinn.

The home tract came into possession of Hannah (McMinn) Parsley according to the above agreement, and the Parsley family lived here for many years. After Hannah's death, Charles F. Parsley, Sr. continued to make it his home and after he died, his children, Luke A.; Phyllis; C. Franklin, Jr.; and Betty, sold the property about 1945 to the Figuly brothers, John, Albert, and Ben. John Figuly married Ruby Parsley (a descendant of Joseph and Alice Parsley above). They lived here for thirty years, and their son, John Joseph Figuly, occupies this old home today.

Pine Slash and Prospect Hill

These two homes are located off route 643 near Studley Road. At one time there may have been an entrance off route 606. Pine Slash is one of the oldest frame houses in the county and fortunately has been preserved. According to tradition, it was the home to which Patrick Henry took his first bride in 1754, and is often referred to as the honeymoon cottage. Some published records have stated that it burned during their occupancy; other records state it did not. Pine Slash with 300 acres was supposed to have been given to Mrs. Henry as a present by her father, John Shelton, of Rural Plains which is located nearby, and at one time, there was a road connecting these two properties. Although these statements may be true, there are no primary records to document these traditions. The honeymoon cottage is a rectangular frame building of one-story and an attic, with a half-cellar under one end. It is about sixty feet long and twenty-five feet wide. It still has the old batten doors and the old wooden locks with their massive iron keys. It has two rooms,

one-story, with a loft. After another room was added, the end chimney became an inside chimney.

This historic structure faces the side of another old home located in the yard and which was built before the Civil War, probably before 1829 when \$1372 was shown for a new building on the land taxes of that year along with 784 acres. This second structure is Dutch colonial with English basement of brick 17" thick. In the warming kitchen, the hearth is 3x9'. There is a groove in the bricks for sharpening knives. In the dining room there are metal hooks for wooden ceiling fans. There are two rooms on each floor with center hall, one-room deep and six fireplaces. Most floor boards, and some glass panes are original. The doors are cross and bible type with square brass rim locks. The living room has wainscoting. This second structure was later called Prospect Hill, and was the home of a Jones family for several generations. The

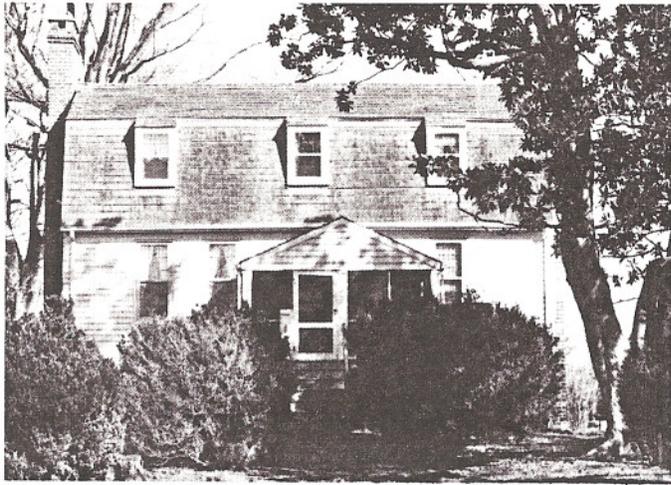


Pine Slash (courtesy of Leah Taylor)

Hanover land taxes 1783-1786 alterations, show John Sime [Syme] as the owner of land on which these two houses stand. A notation by John Syme's name states, "not entered on tax book before, 233 acres conveyed to Leighton Wood." This John Syme may have been Patrick Henry's half-brother who died at Rocky Mills in 1805. From 1787 through 1796 Leighton Wood paid taxes on the property. In 1797 Leighton Wood sold the 233 acres to Joel Jones. Jones' will of 1829 named his wife, Catherine, to whom he left ten acres and ". . . during her life her choice of either of the dwelling houses upon the plantation whereon we now live . . ." He also bequeathed the plantation "where I now live" to his son Washington Jones, with the reservation of the house and ten acres left to his mother for her life.¹ Joel Jones' will was proven in 1835 at which time Washington Jones became the next owner.

In 1870, Washington Jones deeded to William Washington Jones the land "bequeathed to Washington Jones by will of his father, Joel Jones, 700 acres . . ." that William Washington Jones shall take care of him and his wife, Mary.³

William W. Jones and his wife, Nannie A. Jones, of Richmond, deeded the property in 1902 to Lemuella Ella (Jones) Talley and B.T. Talley, her husband, for love and affection



Prospect Hill (courtesy of Leah Taylor)

and for support of William Washington and Nannie A. Jones. They were in possession of these two old houses and 566 acres until 1941 when Lemuella Jones Talley, widow, deeded the property to Nannie Talley Thomas, her only living child. . . "known as Pine Slash and in recent years sometimes called 'Prospect Hill'."³

Pine Slash is now owned by Mr. William Talley Thomas. The Jones family cemetery is located in a field to the rear of the two houses. Thus we have the ownership of this land for 200 years, and the occupancy by the family of Joel Jones and his descendants for 185 years.

¹Cocke, *Hanover County Chancery Wills and Notes*, pp. 76, 77.

²Deed Book 4, p. 260.

³Deed Book 114, p. 240.



Pleasant Level (courtesy of Leah Taylor)

Pleasant Level

Pleasant Level is located on Route 628, off Route 360, between Newcastle and Hanover Town. The old home has two rooms on the first and second floors, one room deep, with no central hall. The two rooms in the basement were originally used for storage, potato cellar, wine, etc. It had a

dirt floor and there were no windows. Later, the basement was remodeled, windows installed, flooring, etc. and now has the appearance of an English basement with a kitchen and dining room. The hand-hewn white oak beams pegged with wooden pins in the basement ceiling are original. Up to the time of remodeling, the kitchen was detached from the main dwelling and stood in the side yard. The two rooms on the main floor have high ceilings and are 20-feet square, with old English powder rooms on one side of each chimney.

The first year of taxes, 1782, shows Mary Mills with 270 acres. By 1814 her name disappears and John Nicholas Mill's name appears "conveyed from Estate of Benjamin Mills." Pleasant Level stayed in the possession of John Nicholas Mills until 1840 when he died possessed of about 500 acres, adjoining Debdal Talley, near Totopotomy Creek. He was a soldier in the War of 1812 [John K. Martin papers, Virginia State Library]. He married Elizabeth Wade Talley in 1815 by the Rev. Charles Talley. She was the daughter of Charles Talley, Sr. They had six children: John T.; Charles H.; Mary J. (married Nathaniel H. Talley); William N.; Elizabeth C. (widow of Mr. Sweeney, and married (2) P.H. Clopton); and Nancy W. (married Samuel White).

It was the son, Charles H. Mills, M.D., born ca. 1834 who lived in this old home for many years. He was a physician in the Civil War and died 1901. Dr. Mills married (1) Sarah J. Viars 10 January 1867, and (2) Georgeanna Viars 12 May 1887, Sarah's sister, daughters of John and Elizabeth Viars of King William County. Dr. Mills is buried on the edge of the woods, but no stone. His son, George William (Jake) bought out the other heirs in 1940 after the death of his mother and lived here for many years. After Jake's death, his widow, Margaret, purchased the home tract of 80 acres. She later married Stanley Guild, who died in 1981, and she is the present occupant of this old home. Pleasant Level is a Bicentennial Farm, having been in the same Mills family for 200 years.

Pointer's or David Woody's

This well preserved home located near old Cold Harbor was once the property of David Woody (b. 1802) and which was valued on the 1850 census at \$2,000, indicating the house was standing at that time. David Woody owned several adjoining tracts, one of which came into the possession of the William Warren family, whose son, John H. Warren (b. 1842) and his wife, Mary E., sold to Charles D. Woody (son of David). By 1899, Charles David Woody sold to Margaret E. Boze (Mrs. Henry Boze) of Richmond, who, in turn, deeded the property in 1931 to William Henry Boze, her son, citing 103 acres, 50 conveyed to Charles David Woody by John H. Warren and 53 acres by Charles David Woody from his father.¹ The property has changed hands since that date, and since 1970 it has been the home of Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Pointer, Jr.

It was David Woody who gave the land on which Beulah Presbyterian Church stands.² The church is believed to have been built in the 1840's. It burned during the Civil War and was rebuilt about 1869. David Woody was a leader

Westwood soon after passed along, and he put his brother's body into it, and brought it to Westwood. There he found a Yankee picket stationed. Catherine (Mrs. William S.R. Brockenbrough) immediately took the dead soldier into her care, promising to bury him as tenderly as if he were her brother; and having no horse left on the place (the enemy had taken them all) sent him here (Summer Hill), by a private way to elude the vigilance of the picket to get Mary's [Newton] only remaining horse for the poor fellow had given up his to a soldier whose horse had been killed . . . we then went over to Westwood to assist in preparing the body for the burial. . . . We cut a large lock of his hair as the only thing we could do for his mother.

The next day, August 15th, Mrs. Newton continued in her diary:

" . . . we took the body of our poor young captain and buried it ourselves in the Summer Hill graveyard, with no one to interrupt us. The girls covered his honoured grave with flowers. He and our precious Willie lie side by side, martyrs to a holy cause."

From this scene the painting of the burial of Latane was made. Lithographs of the painting were widely distributed and were hung in many southern parlors.

After the Brockenbrough's ownership of over seventy-five years, it belonged to William T. Darracott, who left it to Gertrude Darricott (Mrs. J. Wade Vaughan), who sold it in 1946 to Quentin D. Overman; then to Jos. Bridgers and Mac B. Buhrman, and, in 1954, it came into the possession of Samuel W. Rice whose family owns and lives here today.

Westwood is located on Route 644 at the junction of 605 and Summer Hill. It is a two-story frame over an English basement. It has been remodeled through the years. It is still a well preserved old home, but the date of its construction has not been documented.

¹Southern Historical Society Papers, v. 8, pp. 356-358.

White Chimneys

White Chimneys is located near the Polegreen Corner, on road leading from Polegreen to Rural Point. As early as 1693, George Polegreen owned land in this area and is referred to in Patent Book 8, p. 245, when Rice Hughes received a patent for 436 acres in New Kent County [now Hanover], "beginning at land, now or late of George Polegreen; Atkins; Littlepage, and Underhill . . ." A plat in the Archives Division at the Virginia State Library shows White Chimneys Plantation and the adjacent plantation, Laurel Meadows, both of



White Chimneys (courtesy of Mrs. Robert Alexander)



White Chimneys (courtesy of Leah Taylor)

which were owned by Isaac Oliver, with 260 acres in the White Chimneys tract. Isaac Oliver was the son of Benjamin Oliver, Sr. and inherited the White Chimneys tract from his father in 1810. From the land taxes, it appears that Benjamin Oliver, Sr. had purchased this tract from Daniel Whitlock in 1798.

In a copy of Isaac Oliver's will which was unsigned and undated, he left the White Chimneys property to his son, John B. Oliver and stated, "which was purchased by my father of the Whitlock's 260 acres." Isaac Oliver died ca. 1833 when "estate" is shown by his name on the land taxes.

The old section of the house was story-and-a-half over a brick basement, three rooms, one on each floor. The addition was added soon after the Civil War. It was probably built by a member of the Oliver family, but the date or by whom are not known.

WV 15
HVA
97

After the Oliver's ownership, there is a gap in the records until 1867 when this land was split into several parcels. It is not clear which of these was the home tract. In 1907 Ralph R. Horne and Mary, his wife, sold to J. Toler Martin, three tracts near Polegreen. They in turn sold the property to Joseph Martin and Goldie, his wife, who two years later sold 46.83 acres to Walter A. Tate and his wife, Willie Ellen.² The present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Alexander have remodeled the old home. Mrs. Alexander is a descendant of Joseph and Goldie Martin, a past owner.

This unique home was in the line of fire during the skirmish of Polegreen June 1864 and tradition has it that the neighbors, including the family at White Chimneys, took refuge in the basement of Laurel Meadow which joined the property, but faces on Route 643, another Oliver property. Nearby is a monument erected to the Wisconsin men who fell during this battle. The Daughters of the Confederacy periodically hold a memorial service at this monument sponsored by the women of Wisconsin. Across the road is the site of the old Polegreen Church, one of the original Samuel Davies Churches. A marker erected in 1929 marks this site. The church burned during the Civil War.

¹Shelton-Oliver-Winn papers, Virginia State Library, Archives Division.

²Deed Book 51, p. 121.

White Plains

White Plains, located off 606 near the New Kent County line, was originally built by the Ellett family, and Robert Ellett is thought to be the first owner. His name appears on the 1782 tax list with 600 acres. In the 1850 census, Mary W. Ellett, age 47, lived here and her real estate was valued at \$10,000. By the Civil War years, White Plains was owned by Cornelius Hamilton Dabney, who was once a neighbor.

The architecture of the main house is representative of the mid-eighteenth century. It has two-and-a-half stories with five dormers, and an English basement. The floors, woodwork, doors, and mantels have been preserved and beautifully restored by the present owners. Surrounding the house are grounds that reflect care and taste. The smokehouse remains



White Plains (courtesy of Leah Taylor)

and many old and powerful trees stand to remind one of the importance of passing time. The original section has two rooms and a central hall on each floor. In the living room there is an exquisite circle design carved under each of the four windows. A wooden button in the newel post of the stairway was placed there to show that the house was paid for at the time of its completion.

In 1873 the heirs of Cornelius H. Dabney [Elizabeth S., his widow; George S. Darricott and Mary (Dabney) his wife; Cornelius B. Dabney, and Julia Dabney] sold White Plains to John Solomon Wynn, Georgeanna Wynn and Virginia Wynn 125 acres " . . . real estate of their [the Dabney's] grandfather, Temple Ellett.¹ Since that date, White Plains has had other owners. It was in 1951 that Mr. and Mrs. Dallas Smith purchased White Plains from Alfred Scott Anderson, Jr., and his wife, Ann Curd Anderson. The Smith's have restored this old home to its present elegance.

There are legends of its Civil War days, one being that Cornelius H. Dabney had been sent by the military to a post at Tunstall in New Kent County. At that time the railroad operated a daily round trip from West Point to Richmond. News reached Julia Peyton Dabney at White Plains that Federal gunboats were moving up the York River with plans for Union troops to disembark at White House Landing on the Pamunkey River, and push towards Richmond. This information was relayed by a slave to Dabney at Tunstall Station. He, in turn, dispatched a train to Richmond to sound the alert, thus saving the City from a surprise attack.

White Plains is among the loveliest preservations of old Hanover County.

¹Deed Book 7, p. 6.

Information from Hanover County Historical Society's *Bulletin* No. 10, May 1974, article by Anne L. Ellett.

Williamsville

Williamsville is named for its original owner, William Pollard, and was built by 1803, the date on the bricks over the front door. He lived here until his death in 1840. The records show that John Haw was its construction overseer and its contractor was Benjamin Ellett. Williamsville is located on Route 615, not far from Studley. William Pollard was clerk of Hanover County from 1781 to 1824, and succeeded his father, William Pollard (1726-1781), of Buckeye, which is located a few miles distant, and who was clerk of the court for forty-one years. William Pollard, the second, was born at Buckeye in 1760. His farm, Williamsville, consisted of over 1,000 acres. He married (1) in 1786 Elizabeth (Smelt) Dabney, widow of Isaac Dabney. They had two children, Mary Anderson Pollard, who married John Darracott, and Elizabeth Smelt Pollard, who married Dr. Joseph M. Shepard; (2) Elizabeth (Dabney) Shackelford, widow of Lyn Shackelford, and daughter of George and Elizabeth Price Dabney. Their son, Dr. George William Pollard, born ca. 1814, inherited Williamsville and lived here until his death.

Dr. George William Pollard married Mary Peachey Todd of King & Queen County. The farm was then in its prime and was both beautiful and extensive, yielding large